



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
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JON S. CORZINE
Governor

KIMBERLY S. RICKETTS
Acting Commissioner

Dear Colleague:

August 28, 2008

Christine Mozes, Director of the Division of Youth and Family Services, Kevin Martone, Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Mental Health Services, and I are glad to announce a collaborative piloting of aging out services for New Jersey youth. The recent reports of the Association for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) poignantly document the challenges and disappointments facing youth with behavioral health needs as they approach and move into adulthood. It is our shared goal that we concretize the policy of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Division of Mental Health Services (DMHS) which states we will provide a coordinated system of planning and care for those youth who are aging out of DCF care and are in need of transitioning into the adult mental health system of care provided under the auspices of the DMHS.

In support of that policy, DYFS, DMHS, and DCBHS will be conducting ***transition planning conferences*** to plan for those young adults aged 17-21 who require transitioning from the DCBHS system to the adult mental health system. These transition planning conferences will be face-to-face meetings conducted on the local level involving the young adults, their families and system partners.

This work will target three areas of improvement in service delivery to these youth. First, the specialized focus on the individual needs of youth naturally results in improved care. Second, this project will develop a better understanding of the particular competencies of case/care managers working to transition youth to a young adulthood of wellness and recovery. Finally, an inventory of needs: available, available but limited, and not available services in each community will help us maximize, leverage, and develop our shared resources more fully.

We will pilot this work in four counties: Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean. Many counties are underway with similar work and planning conferences. We are confident this pilot will capitalize on the existing strengths and strategies of community leaders. Chief among them are the CIACC (Children's Inter-Agency Coordinating Council) conveners and members. The CIACCs will play an important role in this work. Each CIACC will receive a

quarterly update/progress report from the pilot team and the team will look for guidance, feedback, course corrections, and support from the CIACC.

We invite all interested stakeholders to attend one of the following **Kick Offs**:

- Middlesex County: September 17th
- Monmouth County September 17
- Burlington County September 18
- Ocean County: October 22

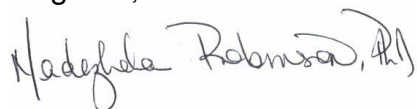
As details are finalized, we will post information on the DCBHS website. You may also be in touch with Mrs. Olivia Townsend (Olivia.townsend@dcf.state.nj.us) for detailed information.

The DCBHS website also features the DMHS/DYFS/DCBHS protocol for this work and “The Tool” -- a useful and comprehensive tool developed to support the work of the planning conferences.

The transition planning conferences will also begin in September; Rosemary Browne of DCBHS is the primary lead for this project. Expected participants of each planning conference are: youth, family and natural support of youth, treatment providers, the DCBHS contracted case management entity, the DYFS case manager, and the DMHS program analyst. The transition planning conferences will bring the group together to discuss the goals and aspirations of the young adult and how he/she can be supported to achieve those goals in the context of continued wellness and recovery. The group will help identify what the young adult’s needs are, what is already in place and what needs to be put in place to make the transition to the adulthood as smooth as possible. The conference will conclude with the development of a Transition Plan which will include short term goals, long term goals, strengths, needs, entitlements to be pursued and entitlements in place. Participants responsible for the plan’s elements and timeframes will also be identified.

I know you share our enthusiasm about learning from the young people and families served in this pilot and the expectation that the process to have a positive effect on New Jersey young adults as they move toward adulthood. Please feel free to be in touch with me or Rosemary Browne (609.292.4741; rosemary.browne@dcf.state.nj.us) with any questions or concerns.

Regards,



Nadezhda Robinson, Ph.D.
Director, DCBHS